

PROPOSED DRAFT STATEMENT OF THE R-X
(Indicating Changes Made in Defense Draft)

The schedule proposed by the Air Force for the procurement and deployment of the R-X would obviously be impossible of accomplishment if substantial progress in development of the aircraft had not already been made. The Air Force have programmed a new reconnaissance plane of high performance to be designated the R-X. ~~It can now be revealed that~~ The proposed R-X is to be developed as an outgrowth of the X-21, a secret experimental aircraft of very high performance and advanced technical concept.

The X-21 program was started in mid-1959 as the result of a proposal by Lockheed ~~that was notable for its advanced technical concepts.~~ Coupled with this was Lockheed's unique management proposal which indicated estimate that the job could be done within a significantly shorter period of time than is generally considered acceptable required and with the resultant savings in dollars. There were in this proposal several unique items ~~of not only proprietary interest to LAG but~~ of far reaching consequences to the defense posture of the United States, and it was therefore decided that any future steps taken in relation to this program would be on an extremely classified need to know basis.

Inasmuch as the structure and design of the proposal presented an entirely new approach and ~~also~~ therefore appeared to have possibilities of meeting several Air Force requirements as an LRI (Long Range Interceptor) ~~as well as considerable potential for a post strike reece or reece-strike vehicle,~~ it was decided ~~to exploit these possibilities and~~ to go ahead in early 1960 with a prototype program in the simplest configuration.

~~This also motivated the decision to continue the work on the ASG-18/ GAR-9 fire control and weapons system originally slated for the now cancelled F-108.~~

~~Due primarily to the Lockheed management approach plus special contractual procedures and commitments within the Air Force, this vehicle is well ahead of what normally could be considered an accelerated schedule.~~

In March of 1961 the program was reviewed by the present administration and the decision was made to continue under the same ground rules then existing contracts. ~~Its post strike reece and reece-strike capabilities were recently given major consideration due to the uncertainties surrounding the B-70.~~

The Air Force ~~for the first time in its history~~ now finds itself — in the singular position of having a vehicle of most advanced performance whose basic design readily lends itself to a diversity of purpose with only the most minor of modifications and little change in performance.

Taking advantage of this diversity the Secretary of Defense has decided that one of the major applications of the X-21 will be in the role of a strategic reconnaissance vehicle. In this role, the aircraft, now designated the R-X, will have a refueled range comparable to the unrefueled range of the RS-70, greater comparable speed and altitude, and a smaller, but adequate, payload. ~~Its development and procurement costs will be a small fraction of these for the RS-70. Because of the fact that many of the technical components necessary for recce-strike are still beyond the current state of the art, it is not possible to commit to a recce-strike system at this time.~~ At first the R-X will be designed simply as a reconnaissance aircraft. This is an important role for future manned strategic aircraft, and is required to give us a desirable strategic flexibility. Other applications for this remarkable aircraft will be developed in the near future.

It is anticipated that system testing of the X-21 will be done at Edwards Air Force Base commencing not before late Spring of 1963.